

The Benefits of the Knowledge Transfer Program (KTP) to Asnafpreneur Students

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ABSTRACT

The Asnafpreneur Project of UiTM Pahang Branch is developed to assist asnaf students in generating personal income through entrepreneurial skill training. The project aims to encourage them to apply hard skill expertise to generate personal income and thus reduce the financial burden on their families during the study period. This project provided various programs and courses to train them to become asnafpreneur students. These asnafpreneur students have received hard skill training in the areas of spa, barbering and hairdressing, and sports massage. Other than that, these asnafpreneur students were required to participate in the Knowledge Transfer Program (KTP), which serves to improve skills and gain exposure to community relations. There were 25 asnafpreneur students involved in this KTP, which was held at Hotel Darul Makmur, Jerantut, on May 11 and 12, 2024. To examine the benefits of KTP to asnafpreneur students, a qualitative study was conducted, and 16 respondents were interviewed. The results of the study showed that the KTP has benefited students in various ways, including the development of hard and soft skills, business management, and knowledge sharing. Thus, this study contributes to the existing research on community programs and their impact on students. Future studies on the effectiveness of the support program for these asnafpreneur students are recommended since there is limited research on asnaf entrepreneurship in the literature.

Keywords: *Asnafpreneur students, Entrepreneurial skills, Knowledge Transfer Program (KTP), Benefits, Community*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship courses have become one of the essential courses to be included in university-required subjects recently. It is implemented to ensure that students acquire a basic knowledge of entrepreneurship and understand how to manage businesses after graduation (Yusuf & Atassi, 2016). Some universities have taken initiatives by establishing centres for entrepreneurship to inculcate an entrepreneurial spirit among students. These centres serve as a platform for students to develop entrepreneurship skills, including creative thinking, problem-solving, conflict management, communication, and negotiation. Students must equip themselves with these skills before they venture into the business world to achieve success. This aligns with the main thrusts of the Institution of Higher Education in the IPT Entrepreneurship Action Plan 2021-2025, as the synergistic entrepreneurial ecosystem has initiated opportunities for IPT collaboration with the community and industry. This initiative aims to produce holistic and competitive graduates (Tuan Abu Bakar & Quah, 2020). IPT has gained various benefits from collaboration with the community and industry, especially in producing quality graduates who not only meet the needs of the industry but are also advantageous for their self-development. The graduates, later, are also involved in society, promoting the entrepreneurial spirit.

In addition, universities also play a role in promoting entrepreneurial spirit in society. This responsibility is not merely for the students and staff of the university, but also for the stakeholders. Universities may nurture the entrepreneurial spirit in society by raising awareness of entrepreneurship as a career option for individuals (Ridzuan et al., 2021; Yusuf & Atassi, 2016). Individuals with a strong desire for entrepreneurship can overcome future challenges to develop their business (Roosli & Nor Aishah, 2021). It is because universities or any other higher education institutions are the places where people seek new information, produce it, manage it, and share it with the rest of society (Saleh & Samsudin, 2021) in (Imanina et al., 2022). In fact, it is part of the efforts to develop the economy of the society, including the unfortunate group such as the *asnaf* students at the universities. Many programs or activities can be conducted that emphasize money-making or income generation to help these *asnaf* students at the university level. These programs or activities then further enhance their involvement with society as well. Therefore, the Asnafpreneur Program was established in UiTM Cawangan Pahang to help *asnaf* students to become entrepreneurs. It aims to equip students with skills that can help them become financially independent and break the cycle of poverty. The students who are selected for this program are known as *asnafpreneur* students and receive various forms of support, including training and education, funding from the industry, guidance from training providers and mentors, infrastructure, tools and equipment, and the opportunity to collaborate with various parties with efforts from the university. With this abundant support and given skills, *asnafpreneur* students can generate personal income during their studies at university. As these *asnaf* students were trained for skills, they themselves need to be exposed to society to enhance their confidence and networking.

However, these *asnafpreneur* students have limited exposure to society or the community. Most of the time, they provide their services on campus, where the clients are primarily students and staff. Therefore, they lack connections and links with people outside their circle. Furthermore, to ensure the sustainability of the acquired skill, continuous training and hands-on activities are compulsory for these *asnafpreneur* students. They must have experience in dealing with and socializing with potential customers from different backgrounds to equip them with communication skills. Therefore, this Knowledge Transfer Program (KTP) with the community was held to provide students with an opportunity to interact with the community, thereby enabling them to strengthen their existing skills. Nevertheless, the question is how far the KTP has contributed to the *asnafpreneur* students' knowledge and skill enhancement? Based on the results of articles searched through Google Scholar, WOS, and SCOPUS websites, it is evident that there is a limited number of articles related to the benefits of KTP for students.

Therefore, the objective of this study is to identify the benefits gained by *asnafpreneur* students through the Knowledge Transfer Program held in Jerantut, Pahang. It is hoped that the findings of this research will be significant to existing studies and beneficial for parties interested in KTP programmes.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Asnaf students can be categorized as students who are orphans or eligible to receive zakat. Zakat institutions provide various kinds of support to these students to help them complete their education, enabling them to improve their prospects and break the cycle of poverty. In supporting the objectives to empower *asnaf* students, universities have taken initiatives to shape and train *asnaf* students to become competitive entrepreneurs in the future. Essentially, the developed programs aim to equip *asnaf* students with the necessary entrepreneurship knowledge, skills, and mindset to start and manage their businesses, empowering them to improve their socio-economic status. Knowledge can be considered as a combination of framed experience, values, contextual information, and expert insight, and it will create a framework to evaluate the new experiences and information (Saleh & Samsudin, 2021) in (Imanina et al., 2022).

On the other hand, knowledge transfer or knowledge sharing is a process of transferring knowledge from one person or organization to another. Sometimes, it may involve a community as the receiver of knowledge. It is known as a process to accumulate shared knowledge among members (Rusuli & Tasmin, 2010). Knowledge transfer is also defined as the exchange of experiences, events, ideas, or information about anything in general to obtain further insights and understanding (Sohail & Daud, 2009). Furthermore, knowledge transfer is a process of knowledge movement among employees in an organisation that increases collaboration for solving problems (Xu & Wei, 2023).

2.1 KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER PROGRAM AND ASNAF STUDENTS

The Knowledge Transfer Programme (KTP) is a scheme designed by the Ministry of Education, Malaysia, that aims to enable universities in Malaysia to share potential skills and knowledge of their academic expertise with the broader community. It is organised and designed to encourage the transfer of knowledge generated in universities to the target industry and community (Firdaus et al., 2020), so these people can gain benefits from the sharing (Nasir et al., 2025). The benefits can take many forms, including knowledge of entrepreneurship, its related skills, and self-improvement or motivation.

The entrepreneurship program is an initiative designed to assist the development of entrepreneurial skills among *asnaf* students by providing them with support through coaching, mentoring, and monitoring. *Asnaf* students must enroll in skill training and courses that will help them acquire additional knowledge and skills that can be applied in the future. Hence, to ensure the continuity and sustainability of the broader knowledge gained by these *asnaf* students, the knowledge transfer program is a promising platform that can encourage them to share their skills with target audiences. According to Mohidin et al. (2019), the promotion of knowledge transfers or knowledge sharing requires a strong collaboration between educational institutions, industries, and communities.

Communities will benefit from this knowledge transfer by learning new knowledge and having the opportunity to gain useful skills. Muhammad (2025) found that the KTP has proven effective in increasing students' interest and providing a deeper understanding. However, to ensure the success of KTP, knowledge management also becomes an important factor. An efficient knowledge management strategy should be integrated with appropriate transfer techniques to entice the receiver to accept and use the information (Ahmad et al., 2022). Therefore, the efforts of recipients are highly needed to ensure that the knowledge and skills gained are valued and applied after the program. Thus, the effectiveness of the KTP should be measured through feedback from the receivers.

Furthermore, KTP also contributes various benefits to both parties. Knowledge sharing is beneficial to organizations by increasing productivity, effective cost management, sales and revenue growth, a positive work culture, and soft skills (Arsawan et al., 2022; Hashim et al., 2025; Jalil et al., 2025; Xu & Wei, 2023). The findings of the study by Hashim et al. (2025) reveal that the KTP organized by student clubs has a positive impact on students' soft skills. They experienced enjoyment during program execution as they understood the objective of the programs. This finding also aligns with Faraazlina and Zunurain's (2019) study, which suggests that community programs strengthen students' soft skills, including communication, leadership, teamwork, professional ethics, and moral values, as well as entrepreneurship skills. The study emphasizes that interaction with diverse community members exposes students to various perspectives and

communicative styles, thus enhancing their ability to work effectively with different populations. It is because the traditional classroom teaching and learning process does not significantly improve students' soft skills. Kamarudin and Semmard (2024) also indicate that the community engagement program significantly enhances and helps in the growth and development of UUM students by exposing them to new experiences and providing a comprehensive education. Despite the challenges they have encountered, the students still gain from the positive aspects of the program.

Additionally, KTP enhances contributors' knowledge by improving their own performance through skill demonstrations. According to Hosen (2021), knowledge sharing improves learning performance among tertiary students. Through KTP, participants gain new skills and knowledge and can perform new tasks more competently and efficiently (Radin Firdaus et al., 2020). KTP provides a way for both parties to learn from one another. The involvement of university students in business fairs and bazaars to promote and sell their products is one of the positive steps to provide opportunities for them to practice the entrepreneurial knowledge they have learned at the university in a practical way. According to Morante Davila et al. (2024), entrepreneurship programs in Peruvian universities have primarily provided students with opportunities to acquire entrepreneurial knowledge in a positive and conducive manner, thereby improving their entrepreneurial skills. With high entrepreneurial experience, students can manifest this knowledge in a practical or hands-on form. Experiential learning by practicing entrepreneurial knowledge gained outside the scope of the classroom can provide meaningful learning for these students (Voforsund et al., 2021).

Unfortunately, limited studies have been done on the benefits of KTP to the knowledge provider, despite its contribution. Realizing the importance of this KTP, this paper aims to identify the benefits of knowledge transfer or knowledge sharing towards the knowledge provider, as well as aspiring entrepreneur students. In this context, the asnafpreneur students gained skills and knowledge from the training providers. They must be skillful and knowledgeable with the skills they have learned to share them with the community. Thus, these asnafpreneur students benefit from KTP through more efforts in mastering the skills and knowledge to contribute to the communities.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

This study applied qualitative research using semi-structured questions to get detailed responses from respondents (Gill et al., 2008). Therefore, to study the benefits of KTP to asnafpreneur students, the data gathered from the interviews with UiTM Pahang Branch students who were involved in the KTP in the Jerantut district, Pahang community, have been analysed. The majority of KTP participants are from the B40 community. The asnafpreneur students need to explain and demonstrate their expertise in the respective skills: spa, hairdressing and barbering, and sports massage to the participants. It involves hands-on activities where they brief participants on each step involved in performing the task, as well as guide them to perform it as part of the knowledge transformation process. The time allocated for each service ranges from 15 to 60 minutes. Participants can choose from the three skills provided according to their preference.

Although 25 asnafpreneur students were involved in the KTP program, only 16 were willing to participate. This number, however, is appropriate, as Creswell (2018) suggested that a range of 10 to 50 respondents is sufficient for data collection. There are 10 questions constructed based on the objective of the study. The questions consist of basic information on KTP, the benefits and contributions of KTP to asnafpreneur students and the community, as well as their opinions on the Asnafpreneur Project. Furthermore, some additional questions are also included to get more informative, thorough, and precise data. However, this study is limited to the feedback received solely from asnafpreneur students who participated in the KTP program; thus, the responses may be biased when compared with other studies. The interview was conducted within 30 to 40 minutes for each session. The data was later transcribed and analysed thematically. Thematic data analysis was conducted based on feedback received regarding the benefits of the KTP. Based on the analysis, the data were classified according to the four main themes: 1) hard skills, 2) soft skills, 3) business management, and 4) knowledge sharing.

4.0 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

For the demographic profile, the study employs descriptive analysis to summarize the characteristics of the respondents, including their gender, level of study, services provided, and faculty affiliation. Table 1 shows the demographic profile of the respondents. Of all 16 respondents, only 18.75% were male respondents, while 81.25% were female respondents. Most of the respondents were diploma students, 65.2 % and another 37.5% were degree students. They were students from five different faculties: 62.5% from the School of Science, 18.75% from the Faculty of Sport Science & Recreation, and the remaining 18.75% from the School of Civil Engineering, the Faculty of Business and Management, and the Faculty of Administration Science and Policy Studies. Most respondents offered spa services (56.27%), followed by hairdressing and barbering (25%), and sports massages (18.75%).

Table 1. Demographic Profile

Demographic	Frequency	Percent	Demographic	Frequency	Percent
Gender			Faculty		
Male	3	18.75	School of Civil Engineering	1	6.25
Female	13	81.25	School of Science	10	62.5
Total	16	100.0	Faculty of Sport Science & Recreation	3	18.75
Level of Study	Frequency	Percent	Faculty of Business and Management	1	6.25
Diploma	10	62.5	Faculty of Administration Science and Policy Studies.	1	6.25
Degree	6	37.5	Total	16	100.0
Total	16	100.0			
Services Provided	Frequency	Percent			
Hair dressing and barbering	4	25.0			
Sport Massages	3	18.75			
Spa	9	56.25			
Total	16	100.0			

The purpose of this study is to identify the benefits of KTP to the participants or service providers of the KTP, which are the asnafpreneur students. The findings reveal several benefits of KTP, which are grouped into four themes: hard skills, soft skills, business management, and knowledge sharing.

4.1 HARD SKILL

KTP is a program where asnafpreneur students need to share their skills and knowledge with the community through three courses they have undergone: spa, hairdressing and barbering, and sports massage. During the process of sharing and training, the asnafpreneur students themselves can eventually improve their hard skills as well as retain their existing knowledge. Hard skills are defined as job-related abilities that are required to complete a certain task. So, hard skills here refer to the skills that are needed as the asnafpreneur students deliver their services, such as spa services, hairdressing and barbering, and sports massage.

The asnafpreneur students indicated that they could strengthen their existing abilities through KTP, in which they have to practice and share the knowledge of hard skills, as can be observed from R1's (hairdressing and barbering) response, "I can strengthen the existing abilities." At the same time, the asnafpreneur student also considered that they could learn better hard skills by participating in the KTP, as observed in R3's (spa service) response, "I can learn skills more deeply." According to Xaitbayeva (2024), repetition and practice in training are crucial for skill acquisition, and they help students improve their technique and movement and develop better coordination.

The asnafpreneur students also mentioned that they could improve further through practice. For instance, R4 (hairdressing and barbering) responded that "I can confirm the skill again...". They can also gain additional skills over the period of KTP, based on the response by R13 (sports massage), "I can add more skills and experience." For asnafpreneur students who are keen on knowledge, they could learn more skills

during the session, possibly by learning from other participants who have better skills and knowledge, as observed from R14's (spa service) response, "Many interesting skills were learned..."

The feedback from these students is consistent with the findings of a study conducted by Muhammad et al. (2025) on the benefits of KTP in improving the students' knowledge of the subject taught. The findings revealed that the Knowledge Sharing Program with the community has increased students' understanding and knowledge in STEM fields, especially in providing a deeper understanding of solar energy technology as one of the components of environmentally friendly energy.

4.2 SOFT SKILL

Soft skills are non-technical, interpersonal, and personal qualities and characteristics that influence an individual's work style. Soft skills will complement hard skills, enabling students to manage themselves and interact effectively with others in any setting, whether academic, professional, or community-based. Through exposure to real work scenarios, community and industry practices, KTP significantly contributes to the development of students' soft skills. With the involvement in the community, students are encouraged to apply theoretical knowledge in practical settings. This hands-on experience naturally builds crucial soft skills, such as communication, teamwork, adaptability, and may also develop networking skills. Furthermore, participation in KTP provides students with the opportunity to meet many people, and they need to socialize and share their knowledge with them. Simultaneously, this helps them to develop and enhance their soft skills.

Hassan et al. (2008) claimed that students have improved their soft skills by participating in the Baktisiswa Perdana program, which required them to actively communicate with the community. Besides, as Ahmad and Nor (2019), as cited in Daud and Nordin (2023), noted, community service can develop students' problem-solving skills and produce civic-minded citizens and foster social reform through cooperation and teamwork. Therefore, KTP is valuable for students, especially those who need to improve their soft skills.

4.2.1 Communication Skill

This finding aligns with the output of the current study, which shows that asnafpreneur students learned about communication skills by using various communication techniques, as seen in the response by R2, "...I can learn the communication technique with various audiences..." They improve their communication skills by communicating with all levels of participants in the KTP, stating, "...I can improve how to communicate with all age levels..." (R4), as well as customer relationships by polishing the communication skills as seen in R4's response, "Can polish communication skills with customers..." In fact, the asnafpreneur students learned how to approach people during the program "...I can learn how to communicate and approach the community..." R9. Hassan et al. (2008) found that participants in Program Baktisiswa Perdana improved their communication skills by interacting with diverse groups of people and employing various techniques. It is also supported by Hashim et al.'s (2025) study, which found that the program with community engagement enhanced the communication skills of Electrical Technology Certificate students from Masjid Tanah Community College through socializing during the program execution.

4.2.2 Relationship and Responsibility

The second soft skill that asnafpreneur students acquired is relationships and responsibility. These two elements are important when dealing with other people, especially when that individual is an entrepreneur. A study by Firdaus et al. (2020) found that respondents strongly believed the KTP projects allowed them to understand better and extend their knowledge to the community. Through KTP, the asnafpreneur students interactively communicate with the participants throughout the program, teaching and transferring the skills and knowledge they possess to the participants. This can be seen in the relationship between them, which can be strengthened through the participants' responses, "...I was able to strengthen the relationship with all the participants and the lecturers" (R4) and "can strengthen the relationship between customers" (R15). A study by Bhattacharya (2008) found that the community program was able to improve the relationship between employees and the community by making them feel more connected to others.

Besides, one way to encourage advanced teaching method guidance is by having a strong culture of cooperation and community practices (Voldsund & Bragelien, 2021). The students also know how to cooperate among themselves to distribute and delegate tasks, as R7 said, "...I know how to cooperate between teams," and R9, "I know how the distribution of tasks among colleagues should be done." In addition, they also become more responsible for completing the tasks assigned to them as R16 responded, "Responsible for completing this program." Jalil et al. (2025) also found that the experience students gain has a clear impact on their ability to lead and work in teams, as evidenced by their good commitment when completing assigned tasks and responsibilities.

4.3 BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Furthermore, another benefit that *asnafpreneur* students obtained from the KTP program is business management skills. In managing a business, students should know how to plan and manage their time to effectively serve customers. While participating in the KTP program, the *asnafpreneur* students learned how to manage their training schedule and time to ensure that all participants could attend their training sessions. Thus, "Good time management ..." (R2) is practiced during the KTP, and during the business operation, as R6 responded, "...and also I can learn time management for business." The *asnafpreneur* students realised that by developing management skills, they could manage their business more effectively. "I can know more about the business world, and it helps me to manage the business in a more orderly and organised manner." R11. This experience helped them enhance their business management skills.

Students have undergone courses that provide them with theoretical knowledge of business management. A series of training and seminars was delivered to the students by experts. Hence, KTP can be considered a platform for knowledge application. The knowledge transfer program can strengthen students' capacities and facilitate their success in new businesses (Galvao et al., 2020). Besides, entrepreneurship programs are also able to help students identify their potential as entrepreneurs and improve the quality of their business (Eesley & Lee, 2020). Oh et al. (2025) also found that the community-industry program significantly contributed to the students' business planning skills. Simultaneously, students will get exposure to potential business ideas that suit real-world applications.

4.4 KNOWLEDGE SHARING

Additionally, *asnafpreneur* students also claimed that they can share knowledge with others through KTP. KTP is a program in which students contribute their knowledge and skills in spa, barbering and hairdressing, as well as sports massage, to participants, as said by R12, "Can share knowledge with others." Moreover, by sharing knowledge with others, it also helps them to gain new ideas to enhance their services based on R5's response, "I get new ideas to improve my services and products." This aligns with Sohail and Daud (2009), who defined knowledge transfer as the act of exchanging knowledge in terms of experiences, events, ideas, or related knowledge that simultaneously allows the individuals involved to gain more information and understanding on certain matters. During this program, students had to deal with different kinds of audiences, which required them to strategise the content delivery so that the audience could comprehend the explanation. As a result, they could improve themselves for the betterment. Stronger knowledge sharing among individuals indicates that knowledge is also becoming more powerful. They can enhance their own knowledge by sharing it with others. Individuals who communicate their tacit knowledge through conversation get more imaginative and creative in their work (Rusuli & Tasmin, 2010).

Asnafpreneur students have been involved in various training programs and activities to develop their entrepreneurship skills. To expose them to the community, the Knowledge Transfer Program was held, and it has had a positive impact on these *asnaf* students. The benefits have been grouped into four themes: hard skills, soft skills, business management, and sharing knowledge. These advantages showed that the involvement of *asnafpreneur* students in KTP does benefit them. As claimed by Mohidin et al. (2019), KTP can positively contribute to participants, while also contributing to the business and economic development and sustaining the nation's well-being. In terms of personal outcomes for *asnafpreneur* students, the KTP played a prominent role in strengthening their skills, improving their business management, and knowledge.

5.0 LIMITATIONS

This study has several limitations. The participants were asnafpreneur students who came for the KTP program only. There were only 16 students involved, out of 70 who enrolled in the project. The selection of the representative was also limited to the skillful students from the three hard skills. Besides, the outcome of whether the program enables them to enhance their existing skills cannot be verified clearly, as the students themselves are competent enough to apply the knowledge. Despite the claim that this program allows attendees (from the community) to improve their skills, there is no pre- and post-test to assess the impact of the KTP program on them.

6.0 CONCLUSION

Asnaf students gained four benefits from the KTP activities conducted, which included hard skills, soft skills, business management, and knowledge sharing. The asnafpreneur students can improve their hard skills related to their courses, such as spa service, hairdressing and barbering, and sports massage, through skill training and knowledge sharing with the community. Furthermore, they are also able to develop their soft skills, especially in communication, as they need to communicate with people of various ages and groups in the community. Other than that, asnafpreneur students also gain more knowledge in managing their business and become more organised. Lastly, KTP helps asnafpreneur students share and spread knowledge to others. The local community has learned the knowledge that gives them the opportunity to open their own business from the business ideas carried out by *asnaf* students. Therefore, they can generate personal income and help in reducing the family's financial burden. The study, however, has limitations, as the responses were collected from only one KTP program, specifically for *asnaf* students who participated in the Asnafpreneur project at the UiTM Pahang branch. The output can be biased compared with other KTPs. Similar projects involving *asnaf* students should be conducted in the future to compare the outcomes and make further improvements, contributing to the participants and the community.

In conclusion, KTP is a channel to promote the positive image of the university due to its trustworthiness and capability in shaping the community to expand their knowledge in business. Organizing KTP will provide better opportunities for these *asnaf* students to develop additional skills that can be perceived from their experience in dealing with different types of crowds. This exposure will shape their perspective on knowledge value and its sustainability and ensure the continuity of knowledge sharing.

Declaration of Generative AI and AI-assisted technologies

This work was prepared using Quillbot to obtain a rough idea for the project's implementation and for comparison purposes. This tool/service allowed the authors to examine and edit the content. The authors accept full responsibility for the publication.

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